

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 TRSE-00 /064 W  
-----272101Z 072865 /70

P R 271936Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9237  
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG  
AMCONSUL LYON  
AMCONSUL NICE  
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE  
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 02799

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT FR  
SUBJECT: PARIS MUNICIPALS: THE POSITIONS HARDEN

REF: PARIS 2102

SUMMARY: AS EVENTS IN THE MAYORAL CIRCUS FOLLOW ONE  
ANOTHER WITH INCREASING RAPIDITY IT BECOMES EVER MORE  
DIFFICULT TO MAKE LONG-RANGE PREDICTIONS CONCERNING THE  
MAYOR OF PARIS. PRIME MINISTER BARRE HAS RECEIVED A  
SERIES OF VISITS WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY FROM GAULLIST  
AND IR POLITICIANS IN AN EFFORT TO FULFILL HIS DUTIES--  
NAMED BY THE PRESIDENT AS COMPROMISOR--BUT SO FAR HE  
SEEMS TO BE MAKING LITTLE HEADWAY. THE CONTEST IS NOW  
TAKING ON A PERSONAL ASPECT (WITH NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS)  
BETWEEN PRESIDENT GISCARD/PM BARRE AND FORMER PRIME  
MINISTER CHIRAC; WITH THIS FRATRICIDAL STRUGGLE GRABBING  
ALL THE HEADLINES, THE MAJORITY HAS LOOKED EVEN MORE  
DIVIDED. END SUMMARY.  
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1. VISIT FOLLOWS VISIT, INTERVIEW FOLLOWS INTERVIEW,  
DECLARATION FOLLOWS DECLARATION--AND THE COMEDY GOES  
ON. AT THE CLOSE OF THE WEEKLY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS  
MEETING ON JANUARY 26, PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING MADE  
A STATEMENT DEPLORING THE FIGHT CURRENTLY GOING ON IN  
THE RACE FOR TOWN HALL AND CHARGING PRIME MINISTER BARRE

WITH TRYING TO WORKING OUT SOME KIND OF COMPROMISE SOLUTION. WITHIN THIRTY-SIX HOURS BARRE HAD RECEIVED IR PRESIDENT PONIATOWSKI, MINISTER OF JUSTICE (AND FORMER MAJORITY COORDINATOR) OLIVIER GUICHARD, IR CANDIDATE AND MINISTER OF INDUSTRY MICHEL D'ORNANO, RPR (GAULLIST) SECRETARY GENERAL JEROME MONOD AND RPR ASSEMBLY LEADER CLAUDE LABBE. MEANWHILE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS (PRO D'ORNANO) JACQUELINE NEBOUT OUTRAGED THE PARIS FEDERATION OF HER OWN PARTY BY DECLARING THAT SHE WOULD APPEAR ON CHIRAC'S PARIS LIST. THERE IS ALREADY TALK THAT THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS WILL DRUM ITS OWN SECRETARY GENERAL OUT OF OFFICE. PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S INVITATION TO CHIRAC TO COME TO MATIGNON WAS ANSWERED ONLY BY MONOD'S BRINGING A LETTER IN WHICH CHIRAC ALLEGEDLY REAFFIRMED HIS CANDIDACY, AND CLAUDE LABBE SAW THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE SAME TIME REPORTEDLY ONLY TO COMPLAIN OF OVERT ATTACKS DIRECTED AGAINST CHIRAC ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

2. AT THIS POINT, ONE THING SEEMS CERTAIN: BOTH D'ORNANO AND CHIRAC ARE MAINTAINING THEIR CANDIDACIES. CHIRAC HAS BEEN OUT ON THE STREETS AT EVERY FREE MOMENT ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING, AND D'ORNANO, WITH FUNDS REPORTEDLY FURNISHED BY THE ELYSEE ITSELF, IS HIMSELF GEARED UP FOR A MASSIVE CAMPAIGN. THE FEELING NOW IS THAT GISCARD SHOULD NEVER HAVE ENTERED THE GAME AT ALL AND SHOULD HAVE LET THE VARIOUS MAJORITY PARTIES FIGHT IT OUT IN PARIS ON THEIR OWN TERMS. BUT IT IS WELL TO REMEMBER

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BER THAT THERE WERE SERIOUS REASONS TO BELIEVE, BEFORE CHIRAC DECLARED HIS CANDIDACY, THAT THE RPR WOULD NOT HAVE FARED PARTICULARLY WELL IN THE MAYORAL ELECTION. TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION CHIRAC'S LONG-RANGE PERSONAL AMBITIONS, AND THE FACT THAT A SETBACK TO THE RPR IN PARIS WOULD HAVE BEEN NOTHING LESS THAN A SETBACK TO CHIRAC HIMSELF, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY CHIRAC DECIDED THAT HIS OWN CANDIDACY WOULD PROVIDE MOMENTUM WHICH THE MORIBUND GAULLISTS NEEDED. D'ORNANO'S CANDIDACY, WHICH IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE LACK OF POLITICAL SAVVY AT THE ELYSEE, OPENED THE DOOR FOR CHIRAC, WHO HAS NOW CHARGED THROUGH LIKE A HURRICANE. AS A RESULT, THE MAJORITY HAS NEVER LOOKED WORSE, HAS NEVER HAD WORSE PRESS, AND HAS NEVER GIVEN MORE THE APPEARANCE OF A HOUSE DIVIDED. CHIRAC'S SPECIOUS CLAIM THAT THE LEFT WAS GOING TO WIN IN PARIS HAS BEEN PUNCTURED BY MANY OBSERVERS, AND EVEN NOW IT REMAINS UNLIKELY THAT THE FIRST MAYOR OF PARIS IN OVER 100 YEARS WILL BE FROM THE UNITED LEFT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 02799

3. THE LEFT ITSELF IS DIVIDED OVER HOW IT INTERPRETS  
THE CURRENT CAT AND DOG FIGHT WITHIN THE MAJORITY. THE  
SOCIALISTS ARE INCLINED TO WELCOME THE BICKERING IN  
THE BELIEF THAT IT SERVES THE CAUSE OF THE LEFT. THE  
COMMUNISTS, ON THE OTHER HAND, CLAIMING THAT THE WHOLE  
THING IS MERELY AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF CAPITALIST  
INTERESTS TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF PRESENTING ALTERNATE  
CHOICES, TAKE ISSUE WITH THE PS CONCLUSION THAT THERE  
IS ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHIRAC AND D'ORNANO AND WARN  
THAT MEASURES MUST BE TAKEN TO COUNTERACT THE THREAT  
FROM THE RIGHT THAT THEY SAY CHIRAC REPRESENTS. IN  
REALITY, HOWEVER, THE MOST SERIOUS CONCERN OF THE PCF  
MAY BE THAT THE PS INTERPRETATION IS RIGHT AFTER ALL AND  
THAT MAJORITY DIVISIONS PRESENT A TEMPTATION TO THE PS  
TO WORK WITH IR AND CENTRIST MEMBERS OF THE FUTURE PARIS  
COUNCIL.

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4. SPECULATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEASURES TO BOOST THE FLAGGING FRENCH ECONOMY ARE PUT IN JEOPARDY BY MAJORITY INFIGHTING ARE GENERALLY DISMISSED (THOUGH BARRE HIMSELF HIGHLIGHTED THIS VERY FEAR SHORTLY AFTER CHIRAC DECLARED HIS CANDIDACY). THERE IS AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF SOME TO EXONERATE THE PRIME MINISTER FOR HAVING ORIGINALLY NAMED D'ORNANO AS THE MAJORITY CANDIDATE ON NOVEMBER 12, 1976 (PARIS 33814); THEY CLAIM THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WAS MISLED BY GISCARD HIMSELF AS TO THE AVAILABILITY OF MINISTER OF HEALTH SIMONE VEIL AND STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TAITTINGER, BOTH OF WHOM ARE NOW GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE, AND TO HAVE BEEN, ABLE CANDIDATES FOR THE JOB.

5. CONCLUSION: WHILE IN ONE RESPECT IT IS POSSIBLE TO LAUGH OFF THE BOMBASTIC AND OFTEN RIDICULOUS EPITHETS THAT THE MAJORITY PARTIES ARE NOW SLINGING AT ONE ANOTHER, THE FACT IS THAT IN THE RACE FOR THE HOTEL DE VILLE NATIONAL ISSUES ARE AT STAKE. THE PRESTIGE OF GISCARD IS ON THE LINE; SO IS THAT OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER JACQUES CHIRAC. AT THIS POINT IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT EITHER MAN CAN GIVE WAY WITHOUT SUFFERING A SERIOUS BLOW TO HIS PUBLIC IMAGE. IN THE COMING DAYS BARRE WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE HIS FRANTIC EFFORTS TO BRIDGE TROUBLED WATERS, BUT FOR THE MOMENT IT LOOKS AS THOUGH A RACE TO THE FINISH HAS BEEN ENGAGED AND THAT THE EVENTUAL SUCCESS OF BARRE'S "COMPROMISE" MISSION IS HIGHLY QUESTIONABLE.

6. SUCH A RESULT STILL DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF BOTH CHIRAC AND D'ORNANO RUNNING, WINNING SEATS AND LEAVING THE SELECTION OF MAYOR UP TO THE 109 PARIS COUNCILLORS THEMSELVES. IN FACT, BARRE CAN HOPE, IN THE BEST CASE, FOR A GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT THAT CHIRAC AND D'ORNANO RUN COMMON LISTS IN DISTRICTS WHERE THE LEFT

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IS DANGEROUS, THAT THEY WILL REFRAIN FROM ATTACKING EACH OTHER, AND THAT THE FINAL SHOWDOWN WILL BE WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL WHEN EACH GROUP KNOWS HOW MANY SEATS IT CONTROLS. IF THEY CAN REACH THIS TYPE OF MODUS VIVENDI, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO KEEP THE MAJORITY FROM FALLING SO FAR APART AS TO CAUSE EARLY LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

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